

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action dated July 30, 2007. Reconsideration and allowance are requested.

Claims 1, 5-10, 23-25, 27, and 33 remain in this application. Claims 2-4, 11-22, 26, and 28-32 were previously canceled.

Claim Rejection under 35 USC 103

In the Office Action, claims 1, 5-10, 23-25, 27, and 33 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Berezin et al (US 5,539,752) in view of Stephan et al (US 6,388,001 B1), further in view of Nishimura et al (US 5,761,337), further in view of Kumagai (US 5,394,481), further in view of Jarvis et al (US 6,297,644 B1). Although counsel for assignee does not believe that claims 1, 5-10, 23-25, 27, and 33 are obvious under the cited references, in an effort to expedite prosecution, claims 1, 5-10, 23-25, 27, and 33 have been amended to further clarify the displaying step.

Specifically, claim 1 has been amended to recite "displaying on a screen said extracted plural defect candidate images in either a first display area or a second display area according to the defect type of each of the extracted defect candidate images together with their classified information regarding the first category and the second category, wherein the first display area corresponds to the first category and the second display area corresponds to the second category." Claim 6 has been amended to recite "displaying on a screen said extracted plural defect candidate images in one of a plurality of areas divided by the defect type together with their first and second information, said first information relating to said classification of defect type, and said second information relating to said evaluation of said criticality of defect." Claim 9 has been amended to recite "displaying on a single screen a distribution on said inspected object of said defect candidates classified in said first category in a map format together with defect candidate images of the first category and/or second category together with their classified information regarding the first category and the second category."

Support for these amendments can be found throughout the originally filed specification including FIGS. 18-19 and related description found on page 17, line 17 through page 19, line 2. For example, FIG. 18 illustrates a display screen that is segmented according to the defect class. In each of the segmented defect class areas, several of the defect candidate images are displayed side by side with their classification information. FIG. 19 illustrates a display screen that includes a first portion for displaying a distribution of defects in a map format and a second portion for displaying defect candidate images together with their classification information.

Since claims 5, 7-8, 10, 23-25, 27, and 33 are dependent claims that depend from independent claims 1, 6 and 9, claims 5, 7-8, 10, 23-25, 27, and 33 have also been amended. Therefore, counsel for assignee believes that all of the pending claims are patentable over the cited references. Counsel for assignee respectfully requests that the claims be examined in light of these amendments and remarks.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,

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